



# BILLY ELLIOT

## THE MUSICAL

# EDUCATION PACK

**Mousetrap**  
THEATRE PROJECTS

...inspiring young people

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# EDUCATION PACK

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# INTRO

*'I think you'd look cush in a tutu.'*

*Billy Elliot* first came to the public's attention in the year 2000 when it was released as a film to universal acclaim. People flocked to hear the story of the boy who discovers an unexpected talent that changes his life forever.

Writer Lee Hall adapted his screenplay into a musical stage version that opened at the Victoria Palace Theatre in London on 12 May 2005.

This resource pack is an essential tool to help you make the most of your trip to see the show. We will take you on a whistle-stop tour of *Billy Elliot the Musical*, investigate the show as a stimulus for cross-curricular classroom activities, providing you, as we go, with resources, discussion points and loads of lesson ideas. There are photocopiable classroom resources, video and audio suggestions, books and links to websites at the back of the pack. For non-specialists, we have also provided a glossary of dance and drama terms.

Although this pack is aimed predominantly at teachers of students in Year 10 and 11, studying GCSE and vocational courses, we have also made suggestions that can be utilised for students at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 5.

It is important for students to understand the political and social context of *Billy Elliot the Musical*, particularly the 'community spirit' that was so fought over during the miners' dispute in the early 1980s.

1984 was the year that Prince Harry was born, the one pound note was replaced by the one pound coin, the filofax was the 'must have' accessory and cabbage patch kids were the bestselling toys. Margaret Thatcher, Britain's first woman Prime Minister, had been in power for five years, having just won a landslide second term in the general election of 1983.

*Billy Elliot the Musical* takes us back to a time of tension and anger, of miner versus miner and of families split apart by one of the most damaging strikes in Britain's industrial history.

*Billy Elliot the Musical* provides a wealth of classroom material. We hope that this pack will be just a starting point for your students' work and that you will feel inspired to explore with them the magic that is *Billy Elliot the Musical*.

**WARNING! Billy Elliot the Musical contains strong language – from the start**



# PLOT

## ***'What does it have to be about me for?'***

*Billy Elliot the Musical* has been described as a modern-day fairy tale. It is the heart-warming story of a young boy whose life is changed forever when he discovers an unexpected passion for dance.

Set against the turbulent background of the 1984-85 miners' strike in the northern pit village of Easington, Billy himself naturally is expected to become a miner like his brother Tony, his father Jackie and his father's father before him. Despite the ravages of the strike, the family scrape together 50p per week for Billy to go to boxing. But, left to pass the hall keys on to the leader of a dance class, the exuberant Mrs Wilkinson, Billy finds himself connecting with the power of the music which, quite literally, moves him in a way that he would never previously have thought possible.

Billy secretly joins the class, without being able to tell anyone. His family, after all, would never understand – boxing is for lads, not ballet. The only person who Billy does confide in is his friend Michael, who is happy to listen in between dressing up in his sister's dresses, a pastime he can explain away very simply: "ME DAD DOES IT ALL THE TIME."

Sparks fly when Jackie Elliot discovers that his son has been frittering away his hard won 50p's on ballet instead of boxing. But nevertheless, Billy takes up Mrs Wilkinson's secret offer of free private tuition in preparation for an audition for the Royal Ballet School.

## ***'This isn't a strike anymore, it's a class war.'***

The strike, meanwhile, is getting more and more heated. There are pitched battles between the police and the miners that split friends and spur Tony Elliot to take the law into his own hands as he raids his father's toolbox for a weapon to use against the police.

When Jackie Elliot unexpectedly stumbles upon his son Billy expressing his deepest emotions through dance, he heads off to see Mrs Wilkinson and find out about the audition. It may mean breaking the strike, but Jackie is determined:

In the pit communities, solidarity is the watchword and Tony and the strikers agree to pool together what little money they have to help Billy go to London to audition. Money from a strike breaker (a 'scab') is unwelcome, but makes the difference and Billy and Jackie head to the bright lights of London.

This is the story of a young boy who reaches beyond his place in the world to follow his heart's desire and fight for his dreams.



# CONTEXT

*'United we stand, divided we all fall in the end.'*

On Saturday 25 August 2004, The Times newspaper reported that striking miners had run riot at Easington colliery, Co. Durham as "the North East suffered its worst outbreak of violence in the 24-week pits dispute." This is the very pit around which *Billy Elliot the Musical* is set.

Bricks were thrown through office windows and six cars were written off. Police officers beat people with truncheons as they tried to arrest them. Five police officers and several pickets were injured and the roads leading to Easington were closed.

Even now, more than 20 years later, passions still run high on both sides. This recent dispute ably demonstrates the strength of feeling and disparate positions of the factions involved in the 1984-85 miners' strike.

There are few objective reports about the strike and its aftermath. Who had right on their side is difficult to fathom. Perhaps it is reasonable to suggest that, in some ways, everybody involved was wrong, for there seems to have been little 'right'.

## THE MANAGEMENT POSITION

Ian MacGregor, Chairman of the National Coal Board (NCB), believed that, when he joined the organisation on 1 September 1983, Arthur Scargill, President of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) had already decided to have a strike. It was just a case of when. According to Mr MacGregor, demand for coal had dropped by two-thirds since the 1920s and a re-structuring of the industry was long overdue. Uneconomic pits had to close and productivity had to be increased so that, in the long run, at least some miners' jobs would be secure. Coal mining, he argued, was a labour intensive, inefficient industry and with cheap oil and gas power available, this position was unsustainable.

The NCB had been created on 1 January 1947, under Clement Attlee's Labour Government to manage the coal industry "on behalf of the people." His government's radical legislative programme promised large-scale nationalisation. It was a strongly socialist agenda, one which the NUM were keen to latch on to. They made immediate agreements with the NCB that meant that their representatives became central to its management structure, although somehow, the old mistrust of the days of private ownership remained.

Since then, traditional markets for coal had changed. Most coal mined in the UK was now sold to the Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) or exported overseas. But the NCB was unable to be competitive in its exports and the CEGB complained that "coal prices are now 55 times higher than they were 50 years ago." (Philip Jones, Electricity Council Chairman.)

The Labour government's 'Plan for Coal', the result of the 1974 miners' strike and which Ian MacGregor called an "Alice-in-Wonderland document", assumed a steadily growing demand for coal which had not transpired, due to cheaper oil prices and the world trade depression of the late 1970s. Nuclear and oil-burning plants were now producing electricity without the need for coal, and the other major consumer of coal, British Steel, was seeing a decline in its own markets. The NCB was therefore operating at a significant loss and was being subsidised by the taxpayer to the tune of £875 million per year in the early 1980s.

All of this, combined with the NUM's dominance of the industry, led Margaret Thatcher, Britain's Prime Minister from 1979, to reflect that "by the 1970s, the coal mining industry had come to symbolise everything that was wrong with Britain." In her view the strike was inevitable, so the government, learning the lessons of previous strikes, started to build up the national stocks of coal ready, if necessary, for a long haul.



Arthur Scargill leads the miners on NUM march through London during the miners' strike June 1984

## THE UNION POSITION

Arthur Scargill consistently believed that no pit should be closed unless it was physically exhausted. He denied the existence of 'uneconomic' pits. Any pit that made a loss, in his view, simply needed greater investment. To a government select committee, he famously declared that "as far as I am concerned, the loss is without limit because I am more interested in the investment our men have put into this industry."

The chasm between Scargill's NUM and Thatcher's government could not have been wider. Scargill determined to pursue a Marxist ideology, that "where there are resources of coal...even if there is a loss on the production of that coal, then that coal should be produced." Thatcher, from her capitalist viewpoint, felt that the NCB had capitulated to the NUM, helping to destroy Britain's economic prospects.



Scargill was determined to fight the NCB on the issue of pit closures. He maintained that the priority of the NUM must be "to protect the coal industry from the ravages of the market mechanism... If we do not save our pits from closure, then all our struggles become meaningless." And he believed that every trade-unionist, in every industry, should support the miners in this endeavour.

Despite it being a part of the NUM constitution, Arthur Scargill never called a national strike ballot. Thatcher believed this to be because "the militant majority on the executive doubted that they could win such a national ballot." The union, however, wanted to deal with the strike at local level, deciding that every branch should make its own decision as the closure effects would be different in each community.

Therefore, only limited local ballots were undertaken. The announcement, on 1 March 1984, that Cortonwood colliery in South Yorkshire was to close precipitated the first of these and became, for the NUM, both vindication of their belief in a "secret hit list" of pits that the NCB wanted to close and justification for their growing series of local strikes, the genesis of which began on 8 March 1984.

That it lasted for a whole year, is perhaps more than anything due to the determination of Arthur Scargill who, interviewed in the Financial Times early in the strike declared that "you either take a stance on principle and if it is a principle then you don't back down – or you don't take a stance."

## THE STRIKE

Scargill was resolved that the strike would be adopted up and down the country and he was determined that he would use any tactics to ensure that this would become a reality. Thatcher and MacGregor were determined that, this time, the NUM would not be able to claim victory as they had done in 1972 and 1974 and thus the resources of the country were stacked up to back the police and the courts against the striking miners.

Battle lines were drawn between mobilised police, brought in from long-distance to quell the strikers and the flying pickets, who had travelled from their own pits to ensure, often forcibly, that others supported their cause. Violent clashes between these two factions grew more bitter and bloody as the strike went on.

But the real victims of the strike were the communities who were affected on a day-to-day basis. Villages had grown up around the pits and the small local economies owed their survival almost entirely to them. They were removed from the political arguments by the need to survive.



As the positions of the NUM and the NCB became more entrenched as the strike continued, communities became split as some families felt that there was no option but to return to work. Reporter Caroline Moorehead met women in Duckmanton, North Derbyshire in May 1984. Many “spoke of friends who will no longer meet each other, of mothers who claim they will no longer see their striking sons, of brothers and team mates divided within the same collieries.”

She met Sara Collins, a woman in her early 30s who told her, “My boys now get one meal a day: sausages if they’re lucky, and Smash – proper potatoes are too expensive. No fresh vegetables. No biscuits. One pint of milk a day. We share Sunday dinner with a neighbour to save electricity.”



Violence erupted in Whitehall at the miners' rally in London

Such was the strength of feeling generated by both the striking and the working miners that there were no real winners amongst them. Colin Hughes, writing in *The Times* on 18 June 1984 observed that “the contrast defies splits and solidarities which deepen each day the strike continues, often overriding the apparent issues of the dispute itself... Caught between their firm convictions and their haunting doubts about the long-term damage to their livelihoods, the often claustrophobically close communities have forced miners to say where they stand. Few will now move from whichever road they have chosen, at work or out.”

As the strike progressed, as anger deepened, hardship increased, violence intensified, rhetoric became tougher and splits widened, solidarity, once the preserve of the miners, became the metaphoric battle cry of both sides.

The strike eventually ended on 3 March 1985. On the following day, *The Daily Mirror* commented that “Nobody in elected office, whether president of a union or prime minister of the country, has a right to fight to a finish when it is the nation’s finish. Britain has been put back a year but the scars will be with us for a generation. And that is the ultimate price.”

***‘And the stars look down and see the struggle***

***And the stars look down and know the pain***

***And the stars will lead us back to where light shines again.’***



# DAZZLE

*'Turn on the old pizzazz!'*

Something unexpected stirs in Billy when George, who runs the boxing class, tells him to give the hall keys to Mrs Wilkinson and, for the first time, he experiences her dance class. She dares him to join in and slowly starts to discover his natural talent. Mrs Wilkinson's philosophy is that her students should shine and, in an energetic parody of 'Razzle Dazzle' from *Chicago*, she shows them how. Despite being in a local hall and not a dance studio, Mrs Wilkinson improvises, using an old wooden chair as a 'dance bar' and encouraging Billy in his developing technique. Later, he uses the chair as a prop in the ballet sequence that sees him dream about not just dancing, but flying.

## DANCE

As a whole class or in small groups, a chair is placed in the middle of the circle and students take it in turns to make contact with the chair. Encourage them to think of interesting actions. Firstly, ask students to perform an action underneath the chair (balance, roll, slide, gesture). Then, ask them to perform an action on the chair (balance, jump, sit, stand). Finally, ask students to travel with the chair (turn, spin, push).

This should provide students with some ideas for their own choreography and an opportunity to explore the chair and how it can be used as part of their choreography. The individual choreography can be developed by use of a theme, which can be added by the student or given by the teacher. The dancer can then explore, using the prop, how to show the theme to the audience through movement and expression.

Themes could be, for instance: in prison, in a waiting room, guarding something valuable. Students could also consider adopting a specific dance style such as jazz to explore the prop further.

Extension for the more able could be to add in a second prop, which must help develop the theme. Again, students should be looking for different ways to use the prop, literally or symbolically.

Prop ideas that work well include, for instance, umbrellas, fans, slinkys, skipping ropes, blankets, costumes, jewellery and weapons (fake, naturally!).

Students can also usefully gather together a bank of words to demonstrate why props and set are used in dance. This will help them to develop their individual ability to deconstruct and understand other work that they see.

**Professional work can be used as a stimulus for further exploration:**



Use *Swansong* and *Save the Last Dance*, choreographed by Christopher Bruce, for inspiration and appreciation. Compare and contrast how both dance pieces explore the use of chair and how set can be used as a prop in dance, literally or symbolically. In *Swansong*, for instance, the prisoner uses the chair as a weapon, a shield to defend himself from the guards and as a safety net, whereas in *Save the Last Dance* the dancer uses the chair to emphasise her movements and to add interest.

In *Rooster*, also choreographed by Christopher Bruce, a feather boa is used to seduce and flirt, to trap, to add interest and as a means of exploring contact work. Students should consider that colour provides a useful metaphor for emotion, in this case representing passion.

In *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*, choreographed by Jiri Kylian, a book is used literally as a reading book, but also to play with, to hide behind and to show the child's anger.

## DRAMA

Props can also be used to stimulate improvisational drama. Often, a prop is all a student needs to create and tell their own stories through drama.

Place a chair in the middle of a large circle. Ask students individually and secretly to decide on an emotion. It can be a quiet or a dramatic emotion, but it must be something that they can explore from within. When each student has had a moment to consider their emotion, ask them, in turn, to approach the chair in a way that demonstrates the emotion that they have selected. Other students should aim to 'read' the emotion. Suggestions could be, for instance, anger, hatred, pain, happiness, love.

Ask students to work on their own. They will each need a chair. Provide them with the following scenarios. They are on the telephone, receiving some news. It can be good news or bad news, but must be the same news for each scenario. In scenario one, they can use the chair, but must not sit down on it. In scenario two, they may sit on the chair as many times as they like during their improvisation. As a class, watch examples of this work when students have had an opportunity to explore their ideas. In what ways is the scene altered by the way in which the performer uses the chair? Does their character become more nervous, edgy, upset, angry? How do they use the chair when they are not sitting on it? Is the news received more or less effectively when the character is seated?



Parody and homage are useful tools for the drama student to explore. A specific text can often be used as a stimulus for creating our own improvisational drama, or subtly altered to explore character, theme or situation.

*Billy Elliot the Musical* has been described a 'modern fairy tale'. Ask students to explore other fairy tales that they know, *Snow White*, *Babes in the Wood*, *Cinderella*, *Red Riding Hood*, for instance, but to tell them using the characters from *Billy Elliot the Musical*. In a *Cinderella* parody, for instance, Billy is desperate to go to the Ball (or in this case, to London for his audition), but his Dad and Tony, taking on the roles of the ugly sisters, will do anything to stop him. Dancing, after all, is not for lads. Luckily, Billy has a fairy godmother in the shape of Mrs Wilkinson, who helps him to win his ultimate prize. In this version, *Cinderella's* love for the handsome prince is represented by Billy's passion for his dancing.



## ENGLISH

Use props as a stimulus for creative writing or poetry. A single chair placed on a table in the middle of a classroom will mean different things to different students. Try laying the chair on its side to provide a suggestion of dramatic conflict that students can bring into their stories.

Try including a feather from Mrs Wilkinson's 'Shine' routine or one of Billy's boxing gloves for extra interest.

Use the 'modern fairy tale' idea of *Billy Elliot the Musical* to explore other fairy tales and retelling them in a modern context.

# SOLIDARITY

*'It's everybody's future, it's everybody's past.'*

The miners' dispute with the National Coal Board and the government is bitter and prolonged, but whilst they stand together, they believe they can never be defeated. Their struggles are also represented by Billy's struggle. It is only in solidarity that his friends and family can afford to send him to the Royal Ballet audition in London and it is this solidarity that, ironically, helps Billy to fly the nest and head to the Royal Ballet School at the end of the show. Solidarity is the show's theme – the miners work together against Thatcher and the National Coal Board, the police work together against the miners and Mrs Wilkinson's dance class try to work together to keep her quiet! Unison movement throughout the show helps to reinforce this theme.

## HISTORY

Throughout history, empires have risen and fallen due to people working together to achieve a common goal. Whichever period of history you are studying with your students, use this parallel with the story of *Billy Elliot the Musical* to demonstrate the conflict that often arises from social and political ambition.

Consider the birth of trade unionism, as far back as the early guilds, cemented by the establishment of the Trade Unions Congress in 1868, and the Royal Commission to legalise trade union organisations in 1871. 'New Unions', representing semi-skilled and unskilled workers began to emerge in the 1880s, and in the early 20th Century trade unions formed the basis for the Labour Party – the first time that these workers had been given a voice in national politics.

Ask students to create a thought shower around the concept of trade unionism. Why is it important? Why should workers have a voice?

## CITIZENSHIP

Discuss the difference between capitalism and socialism ideologies, the central difference between Margaret Thatcher and Arthur Scargill in the miners' dispute.

Despite the call of solidarity, the miners' strike ultimately failed because the majority of miners chose to return to work and the position of the NUM was weakened. Were they right or wrong to return to work? Consider the hardship faced by many miners' families after a year on strike. Did they really have any choice? Was this strike really a war of attrition?

Create a 'workers' timeline', illustrating the development in the rights of working men and women. Highlight the difference in the development of the rights of working women and the lack of equality that still exists in employment rights today. Is this fair? Can men and women ever really be considered equal?



## DANCE/DRAMA

The theme of solidarity in *Billy Elliot the Musical* is exemplified by the use of unison movement throughout the show.

Ask students to select individual movements and see if they can perform these movements in unison, working together with a small group – this process will either need to be recorded or one person from each group will need to stand out and watch, as this is the only way to detect whether the group is really moving in unison. Recording and playback of such sequences will also help to reinforce the effect of successful unison work.

Students may find it easier to consider pedestrian movement or themes such as carnival as a stimulus for individual movements that work successfully when performed in unison. Ask students to walk forward for eight counts, salute for eight counts, turn for eight counts, for instance.

Put the individual movements together to create a larger piece of unison work.

Use four chairs to create the suggestion of four characters getting into a car, whereby they have eight counts to open the door and get in, each moving uniquely and individually. As soon as they are in, they start to work in unison, closing the door, putting on their seat belts, putting on their sunglasses etc. Use Lea Anderson's *The Car* to exemplify this.

If possible, use a piece of music where the tempo increases to make the precision of the individual movements even more crucial to the success of the work. For instance, Matthew Bourne's *The Car Man* features the track 'Prologue, Welcome to Harmony'. Use this music, starting at approximately four minutes in, for a sequence based on characters getting into a shower. They get undressed, pull back the shower curtain, turn on the shower, use the soap, reach for the towel, all in unison.

Use *Cross Channel*, choreographed by Lea Anderson, as an example of the use of unison work, particularly the beach section which can easily be recreated with students.

## DRAMA



In *Billy Elliot the Musical*, the anger and bitterness of the miners' struggle is juxtaposed alongside the grace and beauty of Mrs Wilkinson's ballet class. Drama students may wish to explore the theatricality of presenting these two events on stage at the same time.

Ask students to use the 'split screen' device to place two related events side-by-side. Can the presentation of these events on the same stage at the same time actually help to provide depth and illumination to the separate elements?

A student is being bullied at school. S/he is being threatened by older, bigger, students who are trying to steal her/his Ipod. Meanwhile, at home, the parents of the bullied student are splitting up. Mum and Dad are in the middle of a furious row, which culminates in one of them appallingly beating the other.

Students must plan carefully where the action is going to switch from one scene to the next so that cues are clear to all of the actors involved. In rehearsals, they should look for similarities and differences in the two situations and agree on how their drama can achieve the biggest impact on their audience. They must also decide on how their scenes will end.

Extension for more able students could be to ask them to return to the same scenario, but this time to give it the title 'Solidarity'. How can they alter their drama to make the new title reflective of the events that they wish to portray? Where is the solidarity in this situation of conflict?

# DIRECTION

*'It's a good bit of painting, mind. That's what you call emulsion.'*

Stephen Daldry talks about his work on *Billy Elliot, the Musical*.

**1. What is different in your approach to film directing and directing for the stage?**

That's a hard question. In film it only has to happen once while on stage it has to happen every night so there is a need for a much longer rehearsal process for the theatre in order for the actors to build a structure that they can rely on every evening. Creating theatre is more fun in a way because you are together for so much longer: you're more of a family. On the other hand film – ostensibly – gives you more control over the final product, through cutting and editing. They're both so different but you bring the same attitudes and skills to very different problems. In both you're doing your best to tell a good story but while in film you can do that with choice of shot in theatre you have to do it by establishing exactly where the focus is on the stage.

**2. At what point in the production process did you become involved in the adaptation? Was there anything that you particularly wanted Lee Hall to change when the film became a musical? Was there anything that you were determined to should stay the same?**

We all got involved very early on. Once the idea was mooted it was pretty much a collaborative process. Obviously things happen while you're filming that you think you can do better later on, just as things happen when filming, through chance and luck, that you want to keep and develop.

One of the biggest differences between the film and the stage show is that on film we didn't have to have young boys who could sing, dance in many different styles including ballet and act. On film the amount of time Billy spends dancing is actually relatively little. On stage Billy has to dance often and brilliantly. This was a risk we took in so far as, at the time, we didn't know we could find the boys to do it. We were so lucky to find the boys we did – and continue to – find.

**3. Whilst the stage version of *Billy Elliot* is still clearly Billy's story, it seems to have a much greater emphasis on the story of the mining dispute and the effect on the community than the film. It is also grittier, particularly in terms of language. How did this change of emphasis develop?**

I think it's fair to say that it was a conscious decision to make the stage show more political than the film and much more of an elegy for the destruction of the Trade Union movement by Thatcher. The gritty language was inevitable given that we wanted to articulate the rage of the community at the hands of the forces at Thatcher's disposal. The fact is that people swear; the fact is that children use bad language. We didn't want to shy away from this.

**4. Much of the stage show seems to have a very filmic quality about it – the scene where Jackie Elliot goes to see Mrs Wilkinson, for instance, and the miners' lift descending at the back of the stage with Billy foreground. Also, similarly to the film, music is often used to underscore scenes and dialogue as well as provide the songs. Do you think that these things were inevitable given that you are a film director, adapting a film, or were they a deliberate policy decision?**

I don't see the scenes you mention as being especially filmic. I would see them as theatrical. You necessarily have less stuff at your disposal in the theatre so the task is to create as much atmosphere as you can with very little. When Jackie Eliot visits Mrs Wilkinson all you can see is a door, some snow and two actors in the light on a bare stage. This isn't an effect that you could create on film, nor would you really want to.

While Peter Darling (choreography) and Martin Koch (musical supervision and orchestrations) had done very successful musicals before, the rest of us were quite new to the form. It seems a bit silly to have a bunch of fantastic musicians hanging around without using them. Music is another tool you can use for telling a story, maintaining tension and creating emotion. I don't know if it was a deliberate policy decision but like so many other things that happen in a creative process it seemed obvious at the time.



**5. What was your vision for the dancing in the show? How do a director and choreographer work together to realise this vision? Much of the staging involves unison work, had you decided that you wanted this style before you initially met with the choreographer or did it develop organically during rehearsals?**

We spent a time agonising over the fact that we were telling a story about a community who thought dancing was only for homosexual men. At the same time people were going to be dancing because it is, in the end, a musical. This, as you can imagine, is a bit of a conundrum. We resolved it by thinking about the dancing as representing the untapped creativity of the community.

The unison dancing wasn't a prior decision. It grew out of the work Peter was doing in rehearsals and seemed absolutely right in a musical about collective action and solidarity.

**6. In Act One, the juxtaposing of the miners on the picket line and the police with the ballet class is particularly striking and complex. Could you describe how this scene came about through the rehearsal process?**

It's very astute of you to pick this particular number because it was created in a slightly different way than some of the other numbers. Lee wanted to find a way to reproduce the jump cut sequence from the film in which you see Billy practicing and practicing the pirouette until he can do it. At the same time we wanted to emphasise that Billy was pursuing his dreams while the strike was developing, that Billy was pursuing his dream despite the strike. We didn't know just how we could get the two elements to make sense on stage together. We organised a workshop in which all three of us, Peter, Lee and myself fought – sometimes vociferously – our different corners. The result was a true collaboration and the number contains the tensions between our different approaches to telling the story.

**7. What discussions did you have surrounding the issue of strong language in the show? How would you reassure teachers on this subject when they are considering bringing students to see *Billy Elliot the Musical*?**

We talked about this quite a lot. It's a difficult issue and I suppose we could have taken it all out or substituted words like "feckin'." I seem to remember we did try certain scenes without it but it just felt ridiculous, as if we were in the 19th century covering piano legs with lace. I believe that what we have on stage is true to the lives we are portraying – as I've said above – and true to the rage and anger of a community under threat. Since the show opened we've been very careful to state that the show contains strong language. Surprisingly we have had very few complaints, certainly many less than we thought we'd get. I think the audience appreciates that the language is true to the people portrayed on stage.

**8. In terms of the effect that the miners strike had on pit communities, what would you be keen that students took away from their experience of *Billy Elliot the Musical*?**

I would say that the miners strike and its cynical use by the government of the time to destroy the union have ultimately destroyed those communities. On a domestic level the strike tore families apart leaving divisions that still exist twenty years later. At the same time, the strike brought those who believed in it together in an extraordinary way. In many ways it strengthened the sense of community that already existed.

**9. The film ends with grown-up Billy triumphing in *Swan Lake*, watched by his family. How did you reach the decision not to finish the stage show in the same way?**

The show ends with the collapse of the strike, the return to work and Billy leaving his home perhaps for ever. Billy's realising his dream is balanced by – and in the context of – the tragedy of the failed strike. We wanted to emphasise the leap and the risk Billy was taking and not sentimentalise it by showing his eventual success. Billy leaves and he doesn't know what's going to happen, neither should we.

**10. The stage show doesn't resolve Michael's story in the same way as the film. What was behind this decision?**

As above, the story ends when Billy leaves Co. Durham for London. It felt right to us that Michael should feel bereft as the curtain falls. Billy's aspirations come at a cost and Michael represents an aspect of that.

**11. What are the challenges of working with such a large group of children in a stage show like *Billy Elliot the Musical*? How do these challenges differ from dealing with children on a film set?**

We have a superb team of chaperones and teachers as well as a team dedicated to the welfare of the children. It's not so different from the way we had to do it for the film except it continues week after week. For this reason the children are given a necessary professional grounding in acting technique because in the end, they're the ones who have to do it every evening.

The kids are what make this show special, in a way the kids are the show. It follows from this that we have to make their time with *Billy Elliot the Musical* as rewarding and as fun as it can be.

It's funny but for the film and for the stage show, the kids – apart from the Billy's of course – have to spend a lot of time hanging around, waiting for their turn. The kids on the show have been absolutely fantastic. They've been patient and disciplined beyond what we could have hoped for.

# PRIDE

*'How are we going to make a dance about Smash Hits and baked beans?'*

Mrs Wilkinson asks Billy to bring with him to her private lesson any items which he feels mean something to him. Alongside a Rubik's cube, a Smash Hits magazine and a tin of baked beans, he brings a letter which his Mam wrote to him before she died. Intending him to read it when he was eighteen, Billy couldn't wait and, in fact, knows every word of the letter by heart. In the letter, Billy's Mam realises how much of Billy's childhood she will have missed and urges him to remember that she will always be there in his heart. She promises that she will always love him, that she is proud of him and that, whatever happens, he should always be himself.

## ENGLISH

Ask students to consider what they would write to someone close to them who has died or who they haven't seen for a long time. What would you tell them? What things about that person matter to you the most? What things do you remember? Which events? Which words or phrases that they used or which gestures or habits do you remember?

For some students, this should be an imagined task, based on a fictional person that they create. Others will cope with basing it in their own reality. They may wish to address their letter to a past pet or to a long-distance cousin, rather than necessarily to someone who has died.

The task could also be approached from the angle of a character who knows that they are not going to survive and chooses to write a final communication to a friend or family member, as is in Billy's Mam's situation. This could be grounded in literature, using characters from a text being studied in class.

## DANCE

Choreographers may use a variety of starting points from which to create their dance material. They may work with visual images, pictures or photographs, music or poetry. Given the abstract nature of many dance images, the stimulus may be only a small part of an idea that grows as the choreographer develops the dance and begins their choreographic process. Students can explore and experiment with a range of different starting points, such as:

- visual images, postcards, art books, landscapes, and photography
- aural; sound, music or silence
- ideational, narratives, poetry, sonnets
- kinaesthetic, fabric, surfaces.

Discuss with students the section in *Billy Elliot the Musical* where Billy is asked to bring in the things that are the closest to him. Gather students into a circle, in the middle of which is a box full of different stimulus for dance. Explain that a stimulus is a starting point for a dance.

Play a game where students pick a stimulus from the box and either invent a dance idea which they can explain or demonstrate a motif through improvisation (this could be as a solo or duet).



Items in the box could include a poem or a letter. Letters could link directly to themes in *Billy Elliot the Musical* or could have their own meaning to individual students. Poems could focus on seasons, shadows, shapes etc. Other possibilities include a painting or a picture, a piece of music, or other suggestions of themes such as friendship, betrayal or passion. For added personalisation, students could bring in their own stimulus material which must, as with Billy in the show, mean something personal to them.

Having suggested ways in which the stimulus could be used in the circle, students then take the stimulus they found interesting and begin the choreographic process. They should focus on choreographing 2-3 motifs and developing those motifs, concentrating on the use of dynamics, space, actions and relationships.

Stimulus work could be explored within a lesson or over a unit of work. Extension work could be to explore a second stimulus and to compare and contrast the two ideas or to find a link between the two ideas.



## DRAMA

In drama, as in dance, stimulus work is an extremely important way for students to explore emotion, feeling and event based drama. The box of stimuli described above in the dance section could equally be used in drama. It is also interesting to provide all students with the same stimulus and to analyse how differently they respond to it.

Something as innocuous as Billy's baked bean tin, for instance, may provoke very different reactions in students and extremely diverse pieces of drama. These could include a scene from a third world country where baked beans are an imagined luxury, or a domestic situation in a town in Britain, where baked beans are merely the excuse for a family argument.

There is considerable scope for drama in the reading of Billy's letter. In the film of *Billy Elliot*, Mrs Wilkinson reads most of the letter, with Billy remembering words and phrases at intervals. In the stage version of *Billy Elliot*, Billy's Mam appears in his mind, reading her own words. Students may be keen to explore these different approaches to the staging of this scene. Provide them with the text of Billy's letter (provided at the end of the pack), which is short enough for them to learn quickly, and ask them to experiment with their own staging of this scene. Ask them to home in on the reasons for success in playing this scene – pace, staging, eye contact or lack of eye contact between Billy and his Mam, Billy's reaction to 'seeing' his Mam, Mrs Wilkinson's reaction to Billy's letter, etc.

# INDIVIDUALITY

*'Start a new fashion, buck all the trends.'*

Billy visits Michael, where he is surprised to discover his friend dressed up in his sister's clothes. Michael convinces Billy that this is perfectly normal behaviour and proceeds to dress Billy up too, at which point they both burst into an energetic dance routine.

Michael's story is inextricably linked with Billy's. Both have been brought up in a Northern mining community where homosexuality would be frowned upon if it were ever discussed. To the Easington miners, however, it is not a subject that they would ever consider, let alone accept that anyone in their neighbourhood might possibly be gay. Their narrow-minded attitude extends similarly to Billy's dancing. It is not until Jackie, his Dad, sees and appreciates the power of Billy's talent, that he can begin even to consider offering his support. At the Royal Ballet audition, where he meets a professional male dancer for the first time, Jackie Elliot is still wary. In a time of miner versus miner versus police, versus government versus union, it is difficult for anyone to consider such things as tolerance.

## CITIZENSHIP

Ask students to put themselves in the position of a member of any minority group and consider how they may react to the lack of tolerance that may be directed at them, perhaps on a daily basis.

Following this discussion, ask students to write diary entries for a week, for a person from a minority group. This could be, perhaps, someone who is black, gay, female or Jewish. In what ways has this person's life been affected by other people's attitudes? To what extent can they live their life in the way that they would like to, without fear or intimidation?

It is important that students are able to respond to this task without dramatising events, except to the extent that they are naturally dramatic. Feedback on students' work can usefully provoke a discussion on the reality of our perceptions of other people's difficulties. Some students will naturally write from a more personal perspective and this will help to inform the discussion.

## MEDIA STUDIES

The media is regularly responsible for presenting opinions as fact on the position of minority groups in society. Media Studies students, looking at the messages and values that are portrayed by media organisations, could consider Michael's story from the point of view of the community in which he lives. Why is it, for instance, that certain sections of society feel so strongly about particular minority groups?

Internet research, particularly amongst news sites, may provide a part of the answer. Clearly, Michael's story is from the early 1980s and some may argue that attitudes have changed, but students may wish to investigate whether this is actually the case and how the media reports on issues that affect minority groups, such as sexuality, gender, race and creed. Does the media provide the rational, balanced viewpoint that it claims?



Ask students to produce their own newspaper front page, based on the attitudes that Michael could have encountered in County Durham after Billy left for London. Would he have encountered verbal or physical abuse? What position would his father, a working miner, have taken? Consider, for instance, Jackie Elliot's attitude to Billy dancing and his reaction to the older dancer at the audition. Students could consider their story from the point of view of two newspapers with differing positions. How will the story run in The Daily Mail, for instance, and how will this differ from The Independent?

## DANCE

Billy and Michael throw themselves into the energetic song '*Expressing Yourself*'. Working individually, in pairs or in small groups (particularly for those students who find dance composition difficult), students are to begin choreographing their own energetic song for a competition or talent show.

Two sections of the routine can be any dance style chosen by the student. In between, they must move onto a style determined by the teacher, in the same way that Billy and Michael move from a contemporary style to tap during their number. The style that the teacher chooses will be dependent on the knowledge and background of the students. The finale of the routine should be a mixture of dance styles, which allow for motif development and transitions between each section. The overall structure will be as follows:

**Section 1: Opening – student's chosen style**

**Section 2: Teacher's chosen style**

**Section 3: Student's chosen style**

**Section 4: Finale - Mix of all dance styles**

## DRAMA

In order to defeat prejudice, we first have to understand where it comes from and how it manifests itself, which can be subtle. In *Billy Elliot the Musical*, the character of Michael is never confronted about his sexuality by anybody from the community in which he lives. In fact, only Billy himself knows Michael's secret. And yet we, as an audience, know how difficult life will be for Michael when others find out, due to the reaction of the community to Billy's desire to dance and all of the assumptions that go with it. The tragedy of Billy's success, in the end, is that Michael must cope without him as he leaves to start his new adventure at the Royal Ballet School and it is the image of a lone Michael that closes the show.



A useful parallel to explore in drama, would be the story of Rosa Parks, the black civil rights campaigner, who on 1 December 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, took a seat on a bus and refused to move for a white person. Her quiet, dignified protest against discrimination and prejudice landed her in prison, but was a landmark event in the history of American civil rights.

Students can act out the moment when Rosa Parks refused to move, using the dramatic device of 'thought tracking' to discover her motivation for taking this action at this time. Similar 'thought tracking' of characters may help to illuminate the motivation of the bus driver, James Blake. Was he just doing his job? Did he really believe that Rosa Parks should relinquish her seat for a white man to sit down?

Michael's story in *Billy Elliot the Musical* would also be interesting to explore. Assume that, one day, not long after Billy has headed for the Royal Ballet School, Michael decided to go out in one of his sister's dresses. What is his motivation for doing so? The drama device of 'hot seating' may help students to discover the answer to this and improvisation may help them to consider how others around him would react.

# ANGER

*'You have to release your "inner caveman".'*

Anger is a recurrent theme throughout *Billy Elliot the Musical*.

At the end of Act One, Billy's frustrations surrounding his situation boil over into his angry dance. Dancing enables him to vent those frustrations and channel them. In fact, Billy is surrounded by anger and frustration that manifests itself as violence on the picket lines, missiles being thrown and splits in families and communities. It is an angry time.

Earlier, even Grandma's anger comes out when she remembers the way that she was treated by her dead husband.

## DANCE / DRAMA

Much of the anger in *Billy Elliot the Musical* is symbolised by slow movements – the antithesis of the anger that is being portrayed. This is exemplified particularly by the flashback scene during Grandma's song, where slow motion is counterbalanced by Grandma's story of domestic violence. This is particularly effective and can be explored with students in dance and drama.

Discuss contrasting emotions in relation to speed. Happiness and love could be perceived as slow emotions, whereas anger and terror could be perceived as fast emotions. Why is this? Perhaps, because emotions with a positive implication generally encourage people to stay and experience them. 'Negative' emotions, by contrast, may encourage people to get away from them quickly, to change their situation.



Ask students to play a scene, either through dance or drama, in which one heightened emotion is central. A scenario such as the receiving of exam results would work as an example, where emotions could run in either direction, happy or sad, combined with fear, terror and anticipation.

At the moment of receiving their results, students using this scenario should find ways to use movement to convey their emotions. Disappointing results, for instance, might suggest slow, painful, sad movements. Good results might suggest fast, jumping, excited movements.

Reverse the speed of the movements, using the opposite speed. How can we make this work and how can we make it believable? Can we find a reason for a sad person to move quickly? For a happy person to move slowly? This provides an opportunity to explore movement that plays against audience expectations and may also help to illuminate hitherto unseen aspects of characterisation and storytelling.

## DANCE

Much anger is compounded by confinement. Billy breaks free of his small bedroom to perform his angry dance on an empty stage where he is unconfined and free.

Use space to alter the movement of the body, making the dancers' environment a fundamental part of the performance. Ask students, for instance, to represent solid, liquid or gas. How do the molecules react? What will their bodies do to reflect this? How much of their performance space do they need to use and will this alter for the different elements?



Gas is likely to require sharp, jerky gestures, large contractions and leaps as it reacts unexpectedly to its release into the atmosphere. Liquid may provide a smoother set of movements, perhaps a ripple effect using different body parts. Solids are more contained and are likely to require much smaller, enclosed movements, using only the dancers' personal space.

Students can explore the different emotions that these elements may inspire. Can we relate happiness to a lack of containment? Anger, as in Billy's situation, to enclosure and repression?

## DRAMA

All drama is born out of conflict. When Billy finds himself frustrated by his perceived lack of success at the audition for the Ballet School he takes his anger out on another auditionee with much less to lose than he has.

This stimulus provides an opportunity to explore stage fighting and the depiction of violence on stage. Students must be very clear from the beginning of a session such as this that all physical stage combat is carefully rehearsed and staged so that nobody ever gets hurt. It should never be dangerous and, in fact, works best when the victim is in control of the actions, despite the actions appearing to show the opposite. It is the performance of the reaction to violence that encourages the audience to believe in that violence.

Before any physicality becomes involved, it is worth exploring these reactions with students. How can they suggest through their acting that they have been injured? What will their reaction be to the violence? Ask students to react to different forms of violence. It is important for them to be clear about their potential injury in order that they are able to react to it. In Billy's case, his victim's head makes the first contact when he throws him against the safety curtain. A punch in the stomach would require a different reaction, as would a blow to the face.

Begin to rehearse the stage fighting at half speed, the reaction always slightly anticipating the action. It will be worth reminding students that it is not just the victim who must be acting – the anger which in real life would be uncontrolled, is entirely controlled in the perpetrator on stage and is also crucial to the audience's belief in the situation.

This process of half-speed rehearsal will encourage students to be very clear as to their actions and reactions. The 'victim' must know exactly what will happen so that he/she is able to react convincingly.

Full speed performances may work best when shown to the whole class so that students stay very much in control and can learn from each other's efforts.

## ENGLISH



The writing of the most successful fiction and drama is often inspired by personal experiences. Lee Hall, the writer of *Billy Elliot* remembers growing up in the North East of England at the time of Margaret Thatcher's industrial 'reforms' and the passions that this engendered.

Students can use their own passions and their own backgrounds in creative writing. They should set their stories in their own neighbourhoods, using the vocabulary that they have grown up with and the context that they know. Then ask them to find ways for their central character to escape the world that they know and aspire to something different elsewhere.

# PERFORMANCE

*'In everything you do, always be yourself.'*

Travis Yates talks about being cast as Billy Elliot and his journey to the West End.

**1. Can you describe the way in which you landed the part of Billy Elliot? How did you find out about the show? What made you audition? Where did you audition? What did you have to do at the audition? What happened after you had auditioned?**

My dance teacher saw an advert about the auditions in a local newspaper and said that I should give it a go. I had seen the film on TV and loved it. There was lots of boys there and I couldn't believe it when they asked me to come back for a recall. In the end I had to go back and audition for them 4 times! Each one got more and more difficult. Eventually, they called me at my house and offered me the part. I just couldn't believe it.

**2. How long was the rehearsal process? Who did you work with initially? At what point did you work with the main cast? How long was it before you worked on the stage at the Victoria Palace Theatre and what was it like?**

I trained in the Billy academy for about one year before I got the chance to go onstage. In the beginning, I worked mostly with the dance teacher in ballet, tap and street dance. I also had acting classes with the director as well as accent and singing coaching. The rehearsals went on for so long that when I got nearer to actually going onstage, I felt ready for it. Although I felt really sick and nervous when I did!

**3. The story of *Billy Elliot the Musical* focuses on the lack of understanding that his community have for Billy's wish to be a dancer. Think about what they say to him in the show. Has anybody reacted in the same way to you when you told your friends and family that you wanted to dance in *Billy Elliott the Musical*? What have people said?**

When I first started to dance, some of the kids at school would make fun of me. But they just didn't understand and I think they were a little bit jealous as I was getting a lot of attention. As time went on I think they began to understand, so it wasn't a problem anymore. Luckily my family and closest friends really supported me.

**4. Most Billy's are cast from the North of England. Can you describe how your schedule works? How often do you have to come to London? Who brings you? Where do you stay in London? Who looks after you in London? What happens about school? Friends? Family?**



I live in a house with all the other Billy kids in London and we have house parents who look after us here. We all go to a special Billy school together in the mornings and in the afternoons we have extra rehearsals. I play Billy 2 times a week and am the standby 2 times a week. I see my friends and family when I get to go home every couple of weeks. I do miss home sometimes, but I am always really busy so don't get time to think about it really.

**5. What are the best things about being in *Billy Elliot the Musical*?**

I think it's meeting all the new friends that I've met here. It's also an amazing experience playing in front of hundreds of people who really like what you do. I have also learned lots of new skills and I especially love when I get to actually fly as Billy in the show!



**6. What is the hardest thing that you've had to learn how to do for the show?**

Definitely acrobatics. I had never done anything like it before and found it really, really hard. You need to be really strong. It took a long time, but now I can back-flip and somersault and tumble.

**7. The Billy Elliot story is set against the background of a major industrial dispute in the 1980s, before you were born. What do you know about the miners' strike? Can you describe the effect that you think it had on communities such as Billy's and how those communities changed as a result of the miners' strike?**

I think it was just really unfair on the miners. They couldn't work and so they didn't have any money. Some miners went back to work even though the other miners didn't want them to and so it split communities. We did a charity gala with Elton John and the X-Factor judges a couple of months ago to help the mining community that *Billy Elliot the Musical* is set in. They were telling us that there is still unemployment there even though the strike was ages ago.

**8. What would you like school students to learn from watching *Billy Elliot the Musical*?**

That you can do whatever you want to do. The motto of the show is 'be inspired.'

**9. If a student told you that they had ambitions to be in a West End show, what advice would you give them?**

Just to go for it and never give up. Its really hard work, but you can do it if you really want to.

**10. What do you want to do when you leave the cast of *Billy Elliot the Musical*? Are there any other parts that you are desperate to get? What do you think about the theatre industry now that you have done *Billy Elliot the Musical*? Has your opinion changed? Is it as glamorous as some people think? In what ways is it glamorous and in what ways is it not?**

I would like to be an actor and do lots of different roles – but I really want to be the young James Bond! I didn't quite realise how complicated a show can be. There are so many people that work on the show to make it happen, not just the actors on the stage. I think that it can be glamorous sometimes but it's mostly hard work, even though it's fun.



# AUDITION

*'Do you think I do these classes for the good of me health?'*

Billy works hard with Mrs Wilkinson to prepare for his audition at the Royal Ballet School and she writes an enthusiastic letter in his support. But when Billy gets to London, he and his Dad are both overwhelmed and intimidated by the grandeur of the environment as well as the people that they meet. The audition panel are a million miles away from the sort of people that Billy has grown up with and he suddenly feels insecure and extremely nervous.

However, Billy somehow manages to find a way to explain the feeling that he gets when he is dancing, helping to persuade a sceptical panel that he may indeed be worthy to attend the school.

## DANCE

Talk about Billy's audition and what students feel makes a good dancer.

Use *Save the Last Dance*, directed by Thomas Carter, as inspiration. Thought shower different dance styles and the countries they originate from. Discuss their similarities and differences, i.e. ballet is en pointe, contemporary is grounded, hip-hop identified by locking, popping, footwork and with free expression.

Watch the last section '*The Audition*' from *Save the Last Dance*; focus on the three dance styles and identify their similarities and differences. Students take one ballet, one hip-hop and one contemporary motif from the video and try to replicate these in their own work.

*Swan Song* by Christopher Bruce could also be used to compare and contrast dance styles; for example, tango, contemporary, tap, contact improvisation and ballet are all used throughout this dance piece.



Performance and interpretative skills need to be explored in detail, as they are vital for any performance in dance. A performance may encompass numerous distractions, but the dancer must become immersed in their dance and be able to ignore these external events. Practical activities that explore this discipline could include, for example: facing a partner (not a mirror) during a warm up/dance sequence; improving spatial awareness by creating a travelling sequence from corners of the room or performing to walls other than the front while doing warm up and technique.

Students can explore a variety of ways for dancers to learn to concentrate, by performing a dance whilst answering questions, practising whilst their audience provide distractions, i.e. waving or talking. Naturally, it must be emphasised to audience members that this is an exercise for the dancers' benefit and not the way that we would ordinarily expect an audience to behave.

Students can then perform their dance as a live audition to the rest of the class, focusing on emphasising the dance styles and performance skills.

Specific workshop lessons could be undertaken in any of the previously explored dance styles:

**Ballet Workshop:** basic ballet positions; arm and leg – 1st to 5th positions, The Demi-Plie, The Grand Plie, Battements Tendus, Battements Degages, Ronds de Jambe a Terre and Battement Frappes Glissades.

**Contemporary Workshop:** variety of trust work exercises, exploring the limits that each body part can achieve; teach a number of contact moves, i.e. counter tensions, rolling over each other's backs, hip lift, balances etc.

**Hip Hop Workshop:** explore changes in levels, high (pointing), middle (poses) and low (slides/rolls/break moves), playing with different rhythms, dancing between the beat, locking (2nd and 4th beat) and popping (small minute movements).

## DRAMA

Billy's Dad is out of his comfort zone throughout the audition scene, but as an audience, we know that he is prepared to suffer this for the benefit of his son. In fact, there is considerable conflict inside Jackie Elliot. Earlier, having seen Billy dance, he has realised that he has to make the choice of whether or not to support his son. The character of Jackie Elliot is complex and worthy of discussion with drama students. It requires an understanding and appreciation of the sort of community that Billy has grown up in. There is undoubtedly an assumption that sons will grow up, as Tony Elliot has, to follow in their fathers' footsteps and work in the mine. What else is there for a north-eastern working class lad?

Jackie Elliot's character can be explored through script work, using the Christmas Day scene where he goes to see Mrs Wilkinson to find out about Billy's prospects as a dancer (see 'Stimulation').



Read the scene through with students, highlighting the tensions and assumptions that are made by both Jackie and Mrs Wilkinson. There is history between these two characters, their relationship is already an uneasy one and Jackie must build bridges as best he can. But he also requires answers, in an area about which he has no knowledge or experience. He is out of his depth.

Students should also consider the issue of pride on both sides. Jackie Elliot and Mrs Wilkinson live in a proud community and letting down their defences is not something that either of them does easily. And yet, both of them have Billy's interests in the forefront of their minds and much as they would naturally lose their tempers and shout at each other, they have to keep this particular instinct in check during this awkward conversation. Play the scene, exploring the changing dynamics and perhaps manipulating the tensions for dramatic effect and to highlight specific traits of each character. Playing around with the status of each character will also reveal fresh insights.

## ENGLISH

Billy struggles for the words to explain his feelings when asked by the panel how he feels when he is dancing.

Finding the right words is often hard, particularly when you are trying to explain something emotional.

Ask students to create a piece of composition, in whatever form they choose, that explains something that they feel passionately about. Be it football, acting, science experiments, playstation, canoeing, or dancing as it is for Billy. How do they feel when they achieve their best in their chosen area? What is it about their passion that makes them feel more strongly for it than for anything else in their lives? How would they feel if it was taken away? What drives them to want to improve?



# ANTICIPATION

*'He could be a star for all we know.'*

Despite the background of anger and tension, *Billy Elliot the Musical* manages to maintain a sense of humour throughout.

Billy is not at home when his letter arrives from the Royal Ballet School, informing him whether or not he has gained a place. Grandma finds the letter first and there follows a fantastic comedy routine where Jackie Elliot vies with Grandma for the chance to open the letter. It is Tony Elliot who tells them forcibly that they should not and they all wait in anticipation for Billy's arrival home.

*Billy Elliot the Musical* also contains comedy in the form of satire, most significantly at Christmas, when 'Maggie Thatcher' is the target of Santa's seasonal cheer.

## DRAMA

The staging of a scene can alter its whole dynamic. The post scene in *Billy Elliot the Musical* does not appear comic on the written page but becomes so with the simple device of characters snatching an envelope from each other.

This can be illustrated with students by playing the scene as written and then altering the way that it is played by use of a simple staging instruction (see 'Stimulation').

Try starting with Grandma collecting the letter from the doormat and then putting it on the kitchen table. All of the characters then play the scene staring at the envelope.

The scene still works, but it becomes a scene about tension and anticipation rather than comedy.

Next, ask students to play the scene again, but this time, whichever character is speaking must be holding the letter. They are not allowed to say their line until they've got it and whoever was speaking previously can pretend to hide the letter but cannot actually withhold it. This version will work best if students can learn the lines and play them at speed.

Revisit the first version, as often when they play comedy, students forget about the underlying thrust of a scene. There must still be tension and anticipation. And comedy, of course, will work best if the characters play it 'for real' and not 'for laughs'. In Jackie and Grandma's case, they want the letter so that they can open it: in Tony's case, he wants the letter so that he can stop them opening it. They must believe in these motivations to make the scene work.

At the beginning of Act Two in *Billy Elliot the Musical*, Santa steps through the curtains and addresses the audience directly. This device has the audience assuming the role of guests at the 'Easington District Miner's Welfare and temporary soup kitchen annual Christmas party!' Drama students may wish to consider other, similar dramatic devices such as aside and narration.



# VICTORY

***‘What’s the point in trying to keep the community together anyway?’***

In *Billy Elliot the Musical*, any victories at the end of the show are certainly tempered by their resultant costs. The strike is over. The miners have lost. The government and the National Coal Board have won. The cost in the destruction of community and family is incalculable.

Billy has gained a place at the Royal Ballet School. Michael has lost. Billy has won. The cost to Michael is significant.

The story threads are complex, as is the adaptation of *Billy Elliot* from a film to a stage musical. Whichever way we look at it, both forms deliver a significant victory to the creative teams who put them together.

## DRAMA

Part of the art of successful theatrical staging is the creation of pictures. A multi-sensory approach enables the audience to be bombarded with images, sounds, lights and effects that come together with the script and the actors to tell the story of the show.

The chair, used by Billy so successfully as a prop for his dancing early in the show, also acts as an ongoing device throughout. Pictures are painted during *Grandma’s Song*, for instance, using a flashback sequence to suggest something of her early married life. Later, at the end of the Christmas party celebrations, the residents of Easington make their way slowly off stage, using the levels of their celebratory balloons, tied to the same chairs, to create virtually still images.

Students can experiment with the use of freeze frames within their drama to ‘mark the moment’, highlighting important sections of their work, where they feel that extra emphasis is required. This could include the focusing of an audience’s attention on to an exiting character, for instance.

Try giving students the scenario of a cosy family evening. Everybody is getting on with each other, nothing appears to be wrong. One child tries, in his/her innocent way, to tell their parent something. S/he doesn’t know how to say it – it could be an appalling trauma such as child abuse or the reporting of a bullying at school. Either way, the information never comes out. S/he cannot say it, is silenced or put down by the parent. As the child is sent to bed at the end of the scene, ask students to find a way of focussing the audience’s attention on the child and suggesting that something is about to happen to him/her in the next scene. For instance, the rest of the scene could freeze as the child slowly walks away. Students can then explore other devices that focus the attention in the same way.



## ENGLISH/DRAMA

*Billy Elliot the Musical* recognises and embraces the fact that it is occupying a different form to its filmic cousin. But the adaptation of work that has originally existed in one form and is being crafted for another is complex. Rarely is it possible simply to take the script and transpose it.

It would be an interesting exercise to explore this adaptation process with English and Drama students. Watch the final section of *Billy Elliot* the film, from about 92 minutes in when Billy visits Mrs Wilkinson to say goodbye. Then, study the stage show script from the same place and compare the similarities and differences (see ‘Stimulation’).

In the show, for instance, Billy says goodbye to his dead Mam. This does not happen in the film. Clearly, in the stage show, there cannot easily be a bus journey for Billy, and so his goodbye to Tony, his brother, is much shorter on stage than it is in the film. Most significantly, perhaps, our final image in the stage show is of Billy heading up the aisle and away to London, with Michael left as a lonely and isolated figure on stage. In the film, we see a grown up Billy triumph in Swan Lake with his family, and Michael, watching him.

Ask students to analyse the effect of these changes. Which version do they feel is the most effective? Why do they feel that Mam was not included at the end of the film and the grown up Billy was not included at the end of the stage show? Stephen Daldry's position (in 'Direction') may help to illuminate some of this.

Provide students with a section of another film (or allow them to select their own) that they can adapt for the stage. What changes are they going to make? What differences in form must they use in order to achieve a successful adaptation? Compare students' stage adaptations with their film originals.

## MEDIA STUDIES

More and more, the success or otherwise of political parties is determined not by their policies, but on how effectively they market themselves and control the information that they present to the public.

This was already true, to an extent, during the miners' strike. In fact, the National Coal Board's lack of an effective media strategy is, according to Margaret Thatcher at least, one of the main reasons why they were unable to get their message across to the miners and stop it being high jacked and misinterpreted by the NUM (Margaret Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*).

Billy Elliot the Musical provides us with a prime example of political advertising, with the use of the Conservative billboard poster "Labour isn't working... Britain's better off with the Conservatives."

In their study of media messages and values, students can use this poster and other political posters like it to illustrate negative and positive advertising. The clever play on words, in this case, isn't saying 'support us because we have the best policies', which you might expect from a political party, but rather, 'support us because the opposition are so awful'.

Ask students to create their own adverts selling their school, firstly highlighting the good things about their school and secondly the bad things about other local schools that may encourage potential students to come to their school instead.

Consider whether this style of advertising is healthy. Does it work? Is it fair or is it simply a cynical ploy designed to confuse? What messages and values lie behind this style of advertising?



# STIMULATION

*'There's a nice sausage roll on the landing.'*

## SCRIPT RESOURCES

**Billy's Letter** – from *Billy Elliot* the film,  
screenplay by Lee Hall  
(See class activity pages 14-15)

To my son Billy.

Dear Billy

I know I must seem like a distant memory to you,  
which is probably a good thing.

It will have been a long time and I will have missed  
seeing you grow, missed you crying, laughing and  
shouting. And I'll have missed telling you off.

But please know that I was always there, with you  
through everything. And I always will be.

And I'm proud to have known you. And I'm proud  
that you were mine.

Always be yourself.

I love you forever.

Mam



**Dad's Debate – from *Billy Elliot the Musical*, book by Lee Hall**

**(See class activity page 23)**

**Outside Mrs Wilkinson's house,  
at Christmas.**

**WILKINSON:** Hello.

**DAD:** Ok. So how much is it going to cost then?

**WILKINSON:** And a very Merry Christmas to you too.

**DAD:** I've been doing a lot of thinking.

**WILKINSON:** It must have come as a shock to the system.

**DAD:** I know I shouldn't have come.

**WILKINSON:** Not at all, it's Christmas time - good will to all men and all that. Look, would you like to come in?

**DAD:** I just need to know - is he actually good enough.

**WILKINSON:** For what?

**DAD:** I don't know. For the school. For the audition.

**WILKINSON:** Well, we'll never know, will we. Maybe he'd've gotten in. Maybe he'd've joined the Ballet Rambert. Maybe he'd end up on the scrapheap, like everybody else. How do I know?

**DAD:** There's nowt we can do then.

**WILKINSON:** Wait! Actually we could still get him to the auditions in London.

**DAD:** So it's not too late then?

**WILKINSON:** No.

**DAD:** So how much is it going cost then, this ballet school lark?

**WILKINSON:** Maybe five grand a year. Plus living expenses. Sometimes the local authority pay the tuition costs.

**DAD:** Five grand?! I was talking about the audition.

**WILKINSON:** It's nothing. Twenty quid or something

**DAD:** Five grand! We haven't even got the money for a bus fare to London.

**WILKINSON:** If it's just a question of the bus fare...

**DAD:** I don't want your money. I didn't come here for charity. He's my son, isn't he?

**WILKINSON:** For Christ's sake when are you going to get over your pig ignorant working class pride? Look, the kid is gifted, he's got a chance. What have you got to offer him? Mining? This town has had it, it's finished. You're fighting a battle that was lost years ago. I'm not the enemy Mr Elliot; we're all in this together. So for god's sake just talk to me, let me help.

**DAD:** I wanna thank you for everything you've done for Billy. I really appreciate it.

**WILKINSON:** Is that it?

**DAD:** Yup.

**WILKINSON:** This is ridiculous. Why don't you come inside and talk this over.

**DAD:** No. I'm the one who got us into this mess. I'm the one who's going to get us out of it.

**WILKINSON:** Well stuff you then, see if I care.



**Post Scene – from *Billy Elliot the Musical*,  
book by Lee Hall**

**(See class activity page 24)**

**The kitchen of Billy's house.**

**GRANDMA:** Post! Post! Post!

**DAD:** Christ.

**TONY:** This is it!

**DAD:** Well open it then.

**TONY:** What do you mean, we can't  
open it. It's for the bairn.

**DAD:** It doesn't matter.

**TONY:** Of course it matters.  
How would you like it if  
someone opened your post?

**DAD:** When was the last time I got a letter?

**GRANDMA:** We could steam it open.

**DAD:** Give iz it here.

**TONY:** Look, it isn't fair. It's for the bairn.

**GRANDMA:** We could take a knife and slice along the bottom.

**TONY:** Look, nobody's gonna slice anybody along the bottom. Grandma, I'm warning you,  
for christ's sake. Right, we're gonna leave it here for Billy till he gets home.

**DAD:** I cannot bear it, man.

**TONY:** Ye can man

**DAD:** He'll never know.

**TONY:** Of course he'll know.

**DAD & TONY:** Woah!!

**TONY:** Right everybody sit down for Christ's sake! I said sit down!

**MICHAEL (OFF):** See you, Billy.

**BILLY (OFF):** Yeah, see ya Michael.

**Billy enters. He doesn't see Dad, Tony and Grandma straight away. When he does,  
they are all looking at the letter. Billy freezes.**

**DAD:** Open it son.



**Final Scene – from *Billy Elliot the Musical*, book by Lee Hall**

**Mrs Wilkinson's dance class.**

**JULIE HOPE:** Did you really get in?

**BILLY:** Uh huh.

**KEELY GIBSON:** Will you sign this for me?

**BILLY:** If you want.

**BALLET GIRLS:** Where's he gannin like? /  
Shut up. / I think he's lying.  
/ Stop pushin man.

**WILKINSON:** Hello.

**BILLY:** Hello.

**WILKINSON:** Can I help you?

**BILLY:** I just came to tell you. I got in.

**WILKINSON:** Oh.

**BILLY:** Well, me Dad thought you should know.

**WILKINSON:** It's alright. They sent us a letter when it happened.

**BILLY:** Miss, I know I should have come before but...you know.

**WILKINSON:** I can imagine. Ok toilet break girls. Debbie, go on.

**BILLY:** Well... Bye bye, Miss. And Miss, I just wanted to say thanks, Miss. For everything - what you did.  
I could never have done it without you, Miss.

**WILKINSON:** Well, good luck, Billy.

**BILLY:** Thanks. Well, goodbye.

**WILKINSON:** Goodbye then.

**BILLY:** I'll miss you, Miss.

**WILKINSON:** No you won't, Billy. You'll get down there and realise what a crap little dancing school this was.  
What a complete second rate training I gave you. And you'll spend five years unlearning  
everything I taught you. It's alright. That's the way it is.

**BILLY:** No, you don't understand, I'll come and see you every time I come back, Miss.

**WILKINSON:** Here's a piece of advice Billy. Piss off out of here. Don't look back. Start everything afresh.  
There's sod all left for you here. You are very special, Billy. Now piss off before I start to cry.

**BILLY:** Ok.

**WILKINSON:** And good luck, Billy.

**BILLY:** Good luck as well, Miss.

**WILKINSON:** Yeah, thanks, Billy.



**The action moves to the pit.**

**MEN:** Once we built visions on the ground we hewed  
We dreamt of justice and of men renewed  
All people equal, in all things  
We once were heroes,  
Once were kings  
But all great things must come to pass  
We know the first will soon be last  
And in the ground we may be lain  
But a seed is sown to rise again  
So we walk proudly  
And we walk strong  
All together

We will go as one  
The ground is empty  
And cold as hell  
but we all go together when we go

**TONY:** Knock em dead kidda

**BILLY:** Thanks Tony

**TONY:** See you, sunshine.

**WOMEN:** We saw a land where wealth was shared  
Each pain relieved, each hunger fed  
Each man revered, each tyrant killed  
Each soul redeemed, each life fulfilled

**CHORUS:** From each man's means to each his need

We saw a time man would be freed  
We fought for all the things we saw  
The battle's lost but not the war  
So we walk proudly  
And we walk strong  
All together  
We will go as one  
The ground is empty  
And cold as hell  
But we all go together when we go  
We will go down but our heads are proud  
We will go down with our voices loud  
We will go down but come again  
And we all go together when we go  
And we all go together when we go.  
We walk proudly, and we walk strong  
All together we will go as one  
The ground is empty, and cold as hell  
But we all go together when we go.  
We walk proudly, and we walk strong  
All together we will go as one  
The ground is empty, and cold as hel  
But we all go together when we go.  
We walk proudly, and we walk strong  
All together we will go as one  
The ground is empty, and cold as hell  
But we all go together when we go.



**The miners disappear into the pit. Dead Mum appears.**

**MAM:** You'd forget your head if it was loose.

**BILLY:** Bye, Mam.

**MAM:** Bye, Billy.

**BILLY:** See you soon.

**MAM:** No. I don't think so... Do you?

**BILLY:** No. Not really. I wrote you a letter.

**MAM:** A letter?

**BILLY:** Me reply. It's a bit crumpled. Dear Mam,  
And please, Mammy...  
know that I will always be  
proud to have known you  
proud that you were mine  
Proud in everything...  
And I promise you this, Mammy,

**MAM:** In everything you do  
Always be yourself

**BILLY:** Mammy. And I always will be true.

**MAM:** Love you forever.

**BILLY:** Love you forever.

**MAM:** Love you forever. Billy.

**BILLY:** Mam. Bye Mam.

**Mum exits. Billy starts to leave, but is called back by Michael on his bike.**

**MICHAEL:** Oi, dancing boy!

**BiLLY:** See you Michael.

**MICHAEL:** See you Billy.

**Billy leaves town, watched by Michael.**

**THE END**

# GLOSSARY

*'Thank God for that, the suspense was killing me.'*

## DANCE AND DRAMA TERMS



<b>Action:</b>	Using the whole body (e.g. whole body stretch); Using isolated parts of the body (e.g. gesture)
<b>Balance:</b>	On-balance, off-balance; supported or unsupported in dance.
<b>Canon:</b>	A choreographic form in which groups perform the same single movement or sequence at different times so that it overlaps, one after the other.
<b>Choreography:</b>	Planning and arranging dance movements into a meaningful whole; the process of building a composition; a finished dance work.
<b>Contact Work:</b>	Contact Improvisation (CI) is a dance technique in which points of physical contact provide the starting point for movement improvisation and exploration. Contact Improvisation is a form of dance improvisation.
<b>Creative process:</b>	An ongoing process of exploration, selection, combination, refinement, and reflection to compose movement sequences, dances or dramatic performances.
<b>Dimension:</b>	Small, large, narrow or wide movements in dance.
<b>Direction:</b>	Forward, backward, sideways, diagonal, up, down.
<b>Duo/Duet:</b>	Movements or actions involving two people.
<b>Dynamics:</b>	"How is the body moving?" Energy: strong, light; tension, relaxation Flow: sustained, suspended; lyrical, staccato
<b>Focus:</b>	Direction body is facing, eye focus direction.
<b>Freeze-frame:</b>	A dramatic convention whereby the action freezes at a predetermined point. Used either to highlight a particular event ('marking the moment') or to allow for other action on the stage to take place ('split screen').
<b>General space:</b>	The whole dancing or acting space.
<b>Gesture:</b>	Any action done with any part of the body not taking the weight in dance or to reinforce a feeling or instruction in drama.
<b>Hot seating:</b>	A device whereby a character is taken out of their scene and asked questions by the audience, to illuminate their motivations and intentions and, perhaps, to explain their actions. The actor must stay in character throughout this process.
<b>Improvisation:</b>	Dancing or acting without having sets or steps or a script and with little advance preparation. Improvisation is used to explore different ways of expressing ideas.
<b>Levels:</b>	Low - close to the floor with the intention downwards. Medium- the level of everyday walking. High - any movement done with elevation, not necessarily a jump. It implies a lifting of the chest and an upward focus.
<b>Transitions:</b>	Links from one movement to another.

<b>Marking the Moment:</b>	A theatrical device whereby a particular event, action or speech is emphasised for the benefit of the audiences' understanding of the dramatised situation.
<b>Mirroring:</b>	A lead-and-follow activity for movement exploration, in which the leader and the follower face each other; effective in building trust and sensitivity between individuals or within a group where the leader and the follower are clearly identified. (Good for contact work and use of relationships in dance and drama.)
<b>Motif:</b>	A movement or selection of moves that help convey the theme/dance idea that has variation for development.
<b>On-the-spot:</b>	Movement which happens on one specific space and where the body does not travel (e.g. curl, stretch, spin).
<b>Pathways:</b>	Air pathways are the routes traced in the air during a gesture by any body part. Pathways can be curved, angular, straight, or a combination of these.
<b>Pedestrian Movement:</b>	Everyday movements that can be performed literally or taken out of context.
<b>Performance skills:</b>	Skills used to enhance a dance or drama performance, such as focus, stage presence, use of energy, and clarity of execution.
<b>Personal Space:</b>	The "space bubble" that the dancer dances within. All the space around the body that can be reached into while standing still. Personal space goes with the dancer wherever (s)he moves.
<b>Phrase:</b>	Two or more movement ideas (motifs) linked together.
<b>Plane:</b>	Horizontal or vertical.
<b>Prop:</b>	An object used on stage by actors or dancers.
<b>Relationship:</b>	"With whom or what is the body moving?"
<b>Grouping:</b>	Apart, connected; solo, duet, unison/canon, formations. Geographical connection between or among actors or dancers: side-by-side, supported, near, far, roles/characterisation. Emotional connection between or among actors or dancers as part of a performance.
<b>Shape:</b>	Angular, curved, twisted; symmetrical, asymmetrical in dance.
<b>Solo:</b>	Performing alone, but other performers can be on stage.
<b>Space:</b>	"Where is the body moving?"
<b>Split Screen:</b>	A dramatic device whereby more than one event, usually in different geographical locations, takes place on stage at the same time. Often combined with the freeze frame technique.
<b>Theme:</b>	A stimulus that explores an idea, that is conveyed throughout the dance or drama.
<b>Thought shower:</b>	Also known as mind-mapping or, in less politically correct circles, brainstorming. The process of making initial, unresearched notes based on a stimulus – a word or a phrase – that can subsequently inform practical work.
<b>Thought tracking:</b>	An improvisational technique whereby the audience is allowed to hear the thoughts of a character, usually from a freeze-frame. Used to discover a character's motivation at a given moment.
<b>Transitions:</b>	The changes or links between one movement or phrase and another.
<b>Travelling:</b>	Moving across the general space in any way. Basic (e.g. walk, jump, slide, roll); or combined (e.g. step-hop, waltz-run or triplet, grapevine).
<b>Unison:</b>	Moving at the same time, with the same movement.
<b>Weight transfer:</b>	Altering weight bearing part of the body (e.g. lunge, leap, roll).

# BOOKS & LINKS

*'Don't you want to know what's going on in the world?'*

## **BILLY ELLIOT**

### **Billy Elliot**

Stephen Daldry (2000)  
Universal Pictures DVD

### **Billy Elliot Original Film Soundtrack Recording**

Polydor Records (2002)

### **Billy Elliot Original Cast Recording**

Polydor Records (2005)

### **Adaptation**

Article by Lee Hall  
Billy Elliot the Musical – Brochure

### **Inspiration**

Article by Elton John  
Billy Elliot the Musical – Brochure

### **Billy Elliot**

Melvin Burgess  
A novel based on the screenplay by Lee Hall  
ISBN 1903434335

[www.billyelliottthemusical.com](http://www.billyelliottthemusical.com)

[www.billyelliott.com](http://www.billyelliott.com)



### **Save the Last Dance**

Thomas Carter (2001)

### **Swan Song**

Christopher Bruce (1987)

### **Rooser**

Christopher Bruce (2001)

### **The Car Man**

Matthew Bourne, Ross MacGibbon (2001)

### **L'Enfant et les Sortilèges**

Jiri Kylian (2000)

### **Cross Channel**

Lea Anderson (1991)

[www.dancebooks.co.uk](http://www.dancebooks.co.uk) – books and videos on dance (including the above videos)

[www.ballet.co.uk](http://www.ballet.co.uk) – all things about ballet and dance

[www.rambert.org.uk](http://www.rambert.org.uk) – website of the Rambert Dance Company

[www.londondance.com](http://www.londondance.com) – dance in London

[www.ndta.org.uk](http://www.ndta.org.uk) – website of the National Dance Teachers Association

## **DRAMA**

### **Developing Drama Skills 11-14**

Joss Bennethan  
Heinemann Educational  
ISBN 0435185942

### **Teaching Drama**

magazine  
Published by Rhinegold Publishing Ltd  
[www.rhinegold.co.uk](http://www.rhinegold.co.uk)

[www.nationaldrama.co.uk](http://www.nationaldrama.co.uk) – an online forum for drama teachers

[www.kentaylor.co.uk/die](http://www.kentaylor.co.uk/die) - drama in education ideas

[www.dramateachers.co.uk](http://www.dramateachers.co.uk) – ideas for drama teaching

## **ENGLISH**

[www.nate.org.uk](http://www.nate.org.uk) – website of the National Association of Teachers of English

## **THE MINERS' STRIKE**

### **The Enemies Within – The Story of the Miners' Strike 1984-5**

Ian MacGregor  
William Collins, Sons & Co Ltd  
ISBN 0-00-217706-4

### **The Miners' Strike 1984-5: Loss Without Limit**

Martin Adeney and John Lloyd  
Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd  
ISBN 0-7102-0694-1

### **The Unfinished Revolution**

Philip Gould  
Little, Brown and Company  
ISBN 0-316-64478-1

### **A Strange Eventful History – Democratic Socialism in Britain**

Edmund Dell  
Harper Collins  
ISBN 0-00-255937-4

### **The People's Party – The History of the Labour Party**

Tony Wright and Matt Carter  
Thames and Hudson Ltd  
ISBN 0-500-01768-9

### **The Downing Street Years**

Margaret Thatcher  
Harper Collins  
ISBN 0-00-255049-0

### **Scargill – The Unauthorised Biography**

Paul Routledge  
Harper Collins  
ISBN 978-0002552604

## **GENERAL**

[www.wikipedia.com](http://www.wikipedia.com) – online encyclopaedia

### ...inspiring young people

Mousetrap Theatre Projects offers young people with limited resources and access, the opportunity to engage with the best of London's live theatre. We are an independent charity, working with theatres in the West End and across London. Since 1997, we have taken nearly 50,000 young people to the theatre.

We create innovative and exciting theatre access, education and audience development programmes. Young people take part with their school or youth group, their family or their friends.

### Mission Statement

We believe that all young people should have the opportunity to attend outstanding theatre, irrespective of their cultural, social or economic background. Our mission is to increase young people's access to the best of live theatre in London (particularly those young people with limited resources, opportunities or support) and to enable them to engage creatively with that experience.

As an independent charity, The Mousetrap Foundation is in a unique position to select the appropriate or relevant theatre productions in and beyond the West End that stimulate and inspire young people. We devise programmes that use theatre as a catalyst to explore ideas, learn new skills, develop creativity and offer new perspectives. At the heart of our education and outreach work is the desire to open doors to young people who might otherwise consider London's rich cultural heritage closed to them.

### Areas of Endeavour

- Access:** To provide young people with limited resources, support or a disability, the opportunity to attend London theatre, often as a first-time experience: The London Theatre Challenge, Family First Nights and Envision
- Education:** To enable young people to engage actively with their theatre experience and to use theatre as an educational resource in and out of the classroom to stimulate creative work and to develop theatre-related skills: TheatreWorks, Play the Critic, Insights, WriteThinking, TechTaster and PowerPlay
- Audience Development:** To encourage a legacy of theatregoing among young audiences by reducing barriers and enhancing their knowledge and understanding of theatre: C145 and the Teachers Preview Club
- Creating Links:** To develop collaborations with young people, schools, teachers, artists, arts organisations, youth groups, community organisations and social service agencies with...
- the theatre industry:** Meet the Artists Events, Special Seminars/Round Table Discussions, Teachers' Advisory Group, and the Teachers Preview Club

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